DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 284 332 EA 019 536

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TITLE Structural Reform in the Israeli Educational System: Lessons of Experience.
PUB DATE Nov 86
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Edusystems 2000 International Congress on Educational Facilities, Values, and Contents (Jerusalem, Israel, November 16-21, 1986).
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; Advisory Committees; *Change Strategies; *Curriculum Development; Dropouts; *Educational Change; *Educational Objectives; Elementary Secondary Education; Enrollment Rate; Foreign Countries; Government School Relationship; School Desegregation; *School Organization; *Teacher Education; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS Ministry of Education and Culture (Israel)

ABSTRACT

In July 1969, an Israeli parliament decision instigated an educational reform focused on curriculum development, teacher education, new buildings, new equipment, and a change from 8 to 6 years in elementary school and from 4 to 6 years in secondary school. Dropouts, useless curricula, job market demands for better education, and integration and academic achievement needs necessitated the reform. Elements of the decision included implementation, teacher training, the future educational structure, establishing an advisory committee, and building junior high schools. A central committee, a subcommittee for administrative matters, and a subcommittee for teaching issues constituted the structure to execute the change. Teacher resistance, parent resistance, and financial restrictions obstructed the government's objectives. Among the ministry's strategies were public committees to obtain public support and the introduction of normative value-based and broad social goals. The first major objective--to raise the level of studies--was to be accomplished through counseling; attention to underprivileged students; and changes in curriculum, teacher training, teaching methods, and school structure. The second objective--integration--was to be achieved through new zoning and the eradication of the selection process. Results of the changes include increased enrollment, fewer dropouts, and byproducts such as discussions concerning Israeli society and the quality of education. (RG)

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ISRAEL

STRUCTURAL REFORM IN THE ISRAELI EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM: LESSONS OF EXPERIENCE *

A. INTRODUCTION

I WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE A MAJOR EVENT IN THE ISRAELI EDUCATION SYSTEM, ONE WHICH HAS MAJOR SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS. THOUGH IT IS STILL IN THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION, IT IS NEVERTHELESS POSSIBLE TO DRAW SOME BASIC CONCLUSIONS ALREADY.

THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMING THE TOTAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM FROM A STRUCTURE OF FOUR PLUS EIGHT (EIGHT YEARS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND FOUR IN SECONDARY SCHOOL) TO A STRUCTURE OF SIX PLUS SIX (SIX YEARS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND SIX IN SECONDARY SCHOOL) IS NO DOUBT AN UNDERTAKING OF NATIONAL DIMENSIONS.

IN THIS MAJOR NATIONWIDE CHANGE PROCESS PARTICIPATED: THE GOVERNMENT, PUBLIC COMMITTEES AND THE PARLIAMENT (KNESSET) - OR TO BE MORE SPECIFIC THE MINISTRIES OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE, FINANCE, AND SOCIAL WELFARE, AS WELL AS THE TWO TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS, REPRESENTATIVES OF PARENTS, LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MUNICIPALITIES), AS WELL AS VARIOUS VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS. THE STRUCTURAL CHANGE WAS SEEN AS A MEANS THROUGH WHICH ISRAELI SOCIETY COULD GRADUALLY TRY TO ACHIEVE MAJOR SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL GOALS WHICH MAY NOT HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED WITHOUT THIS MAJOR CHANGE PROCESS.

THE SYSTEM ATTEMPTS TO ACHIEVE A FEW OBJECTIVES SIMULTANEOUSLY, INCLUDING CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, TEACHER TRAINING, ADDING NEW BUILDINGS, AND ADDING NEW EQUIPMENT WITH STRESS ON LABORATORIES. THE CHANGE PROCESS STARTED IN JULY 1969 AS AN EXPERIMENT IN SIX LOCALITIES WITH STRESS ON DEVELOPMENT TOWNS.

EA 019 536

*Presented at the Edusystems 2000 International Congress on Educational Facilities, Values, and Contents, Jerusalem, Israel, November 16-21, 1986.

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TODAY, ALMOST TWENTY YEARS AFTER ITS INCEPTION, ONLY ABOUT FIFTY-SIX PERCENT OF THE SYSTEM HAS ADOPTED THE NEW STRUCTURAL CHANGE (SIX PLUS SIX). THE DELAY IS DUE PRIMARILY TO BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS.

I WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE TO YOU TODAY THE OVERALL PICTURE OF THIS NATIONAL UNDERTAKING, IN WHICH I WAS PERSONALLY INVOLVED. I WOULD LIKE TO STRESS ISSUES SUCH AS: THE COMMITMENT OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, AND THE MINISTRY AS SUCH, TO THE REFORM, MAJOR EVENTS WHICH WERE PART OF THE CHANGE PROCESS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS. I DO HOPE YOU WILL FIND INTEREST IN THIS SPECIFIC UNDERTAKING AS WELL AS IN THE POSSIBILITIES OF COMPARING IT WITH STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN SYSTEMS OF EDUCATION IN OTHER COUNTRIES AS WELL.

B. THE REASONS FOR LAUNCHING THE REFORM AND FACTORS REQUIRING STRUCTURAL CHANGE

THE ACCUMULATION OF A NUMBER OF FACTORS DURING THE 1960s NECESSITATED THE INTRODUCTION OF A MAJOR REFORM. THESE MAJOR FACTORS, WHICH WERE OF AN ACCUMULATIVE NATURE, WERE:

1. THE GAP IN THE LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS FROM VARYING SOCIAL STRATA.
2. THE REDUCTION OF STUDENT LEARNING POTENTIAL DURING THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES AS A RESULT OF THE SYSTEM EXISTING THEN.
3. THE NEED FOR A SUFFICIENTLY EARLY REFERRAL OF THE STUDENT TO THE STUDY TREND THAT SUITS HIS/HER SKILLS MOST.

THE GAPS IN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS START IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND ARE ROOTED IN THE CHILD'S HOME ENVIRONMENT. A VARIETY OF RESEARCHES HAVE PROVED THAT THERE IS A HIGH CORRELATION BETWEEN THE STUDENTS' LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT AND THE NEIGHBORHOOD FEEDING A PARTICULAR SCHOOL. IN A NEIGHBORHOOD WHICH IS ECONOMICALLY AND SOCIALLY OF A GOOD STANDARD, THE STUDENTS' LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT IS MUCH HIGHER THAN IN A DEPRIVED NEIGHBORHOOD. THIS FACTOR HAS AN IMPACT ON THE SPAN OF STUDIES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AS WELL.

CONTINUATION OF STUDIES IN AN ACADEMIC HIGH SCHOOL, OR A SECONDARY SCHOOL OF HIGH PRESTIGE, DEPENDED ON SUCCESS IN THE "SEKER" EXAMS THAT TOOK PLACE AT THE END OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLING. MOST CHILDREN FROM AN AVERAGE TO LOW SOCIAL STRATUM DID NOT SUCCEED IN THESE EXAMS AND THUS HAD TO ATTEND SECONDARY SCHOOLS WHOSE ACADEMIC LEVELS WERE AVERAGE OR BELOW, ONES WHICH LACKED PRESTIGE.

THE INITIATORS OF THE REFORM TIED THE FAILURES OF STUDENTS FROM LOWER SOCIAL STRATA TO THE SCHOOL, RATHER THAN TO THE HOME ENVIRONMENT. THEY FELT THAT THE PREVAILING ZONING SYSTEM LED TO THE EXISTENCE OF SCHOOLS WITH A LOW ACADEMIC LEVEL ON THE ONE HAND AND SCHOOLS OF HIGH ACADEMIC STANDING ON THE OTHER. THEIR ASSUMPTION WAS THAT THE CREATION OF MEETING POINTS BETWEEN THE VARIOUS SOCIAL LEVELS WOULD OFFER A STUDENT FROM A LOWER SOCIAL LEVEL A BETTER CHANCE TO SUCCEED IN HIS/HER STUDIES.

4. THE INCREASING QUEST FOR A SATISFACTORY LEVEL OF EDUCATION ON THE JOB MARKET AS WELL AS CHANGES IN THE ECONOMIC STRUCTURE CAUSED A REDUCTION IN THE QUEST FOR EMPLOYMENT OF YOUTH, WHILE ON THE OTHER HAND IT DEMANDED A HIGHER EDUCATIONAL LEVEL FROM THE EMPLOYEE.

5. THE HETEROGENOUS SET-UP OF THE STUDENT BODY ATTENDING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL REQUIRES A STRUCTURE WHICH WILL RESPOND TO THE VARYING NEEDS.

6. THE CURRICULA IN THE PREVAILING STRUCTURE WAS NOT EFFECTIVE, AND THERE WAS NO OPTIMAL UTILIZATION OF THE TIME STUDENTS SPEND IN SCHOOL.

7. INTEGRATION:
THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IS USUALLY A NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL, ATTENDED BY STUDENTS WHO IN MOST INSTANCES BELONG TO ONE ETHNIC GROUP. THE FACT THAT THEY BELONG TO SUCH A HOMOGENOUS INSTITUTE UNTIL THE AGE OF FOURTEEN, MAKES INTEGRATION AT A LATER STAGE DIFFICULT OR EVEN IMPOSSIBLE.

8. DROP-OUT AFTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:

THE ENDING OF STUDIES AFTER THE EIGHTH GRADE ACCELERATES THE DROP-OUT RATE AFTER COMPLETION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. THE ADDITION OF ONE COMPULSORY YEAR, AND THE CREATION OF A MIDDLE SCHOOL, WAS EXPECTED TO REDUCE DROP-OUT LEVELS AFTER THE EIGHTH GRADE.

9. TEACHER TRAINING:

THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADE TEACHERS HAVE NO SPECIALIZATION IN ANY GIVEN SUBJECT. THE ASSUMPTION OF THOSE ADVOCATING THE SETTING UP OF A MIDDLE SCHOOL WAS THAT A STRUCTURAL CHANGE WOULD ALSO FACILITATE A CHANGE IN THE CURRICULUM, DEMANDING A HIGHER ACADEMIC LEVEL FROM THE TEACHERS.

MIDDLE SCHOOL AS A MEANS FOR ENHACING INTEGRATION:

THE SETTING UP OF A MIDDLE SCHOOL TO INCLUDE STUDENTS FROM AN AREA LARGER THAN THE FEEDING AREA OF AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - A NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL - WILL BRING TOGETHER STUDENTS FROM A VARIETY OF ETHNIC GROUPS STUDYING IN THE SAME EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND UNDER ONE ROOF.

A LACK OF SATISFACTION WITH THE EXISTING EDUCATIONAL SET-UP

PAST DISSATISFACTION WAS DUE PRIMARILY TO A HIGH RATE OF DROP-OUTS (MAINLY STUDENTS OF ASIAN-AFRICAN ORIGIN) AND TO A POWERFUL SELECTION PROCESS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION. THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION SAW INCREASING DANGERS ASSOCIATED WITH THE INTENSIFICATION OF THE ETHNIC PROBLEM, THE DROP-OUT, AND THE PROCESS OF SELECTION. THE MECC ACTED IN SEVERAL WAYS TO SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS, BUT THE RESPONSE WAS INSUFFICIENT.

THE IMPETUS FOR CHANGE STEMMED, THEREFORE, FROM A RECOGNIZED GAP BETWEEN GOALS AND REALITIES. DISSATISFACTION WAS AN INDICATOR THAT SOMETHING NEW HAD TO BE DONE IN ORDER TO RESPOND TO THE PROBLEM.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, ZALMAN ARAN, IN INTRODUCING TO THE KNESSET (PARLIAMENT) THE REFORM BILL ON JULY 29, 1969, MADE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

"TWENTY YEARS OF PRIMARY EDUCATION, AND IN PARTICULAR THE LAST TEN YEARS, DURING WHICH THE SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL FLOURISHED, BROUGHT VERY ENCOURAGING RESULTS. OUR BELIEF IS, HOWEVER, THAT THE ACHIEVEMENTS

COULD AND SHOULD BE HIGHER. THIS IS THE SOURCE OF OUR ASPIRATION TO ESTABLISH A NEW SET UP REQUIRING CONCEPTUAL AS WELL AS STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN LIGHT OF OUR EMERGENCE INTO THE THIRD DECADE OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL."

THESE COMMENTS REFLECT BOTH THE LACK OF SATISFACTION WITH THE EXISTING SYSTEM AS WELL AS THE ASPIRATION TO SET NEW GOALS IN ORDER TO RESPOND TO EMERGING NEEDS. THE COMMENTS ALSO TIE IN WITH BASIC TRENDS IN SYSTEMS OF EDUCATION THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

THOUGH AN EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN A GIVEN COUNTRY HAS ITS OWN UNIQUE FEATURES, ONE CAN NEVERTHELESS FIND SEVEN BASIC FACTORS WHICH LED TO REFORM EFFORTS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. THEY INCLUDE (AMONG OTHERS):

1. THE URGE TO EXTEND FREE COMPULSORY EDUCATION;
2. DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION;
3. BASING EDUCATIONAL TRENDS ON NEW CONCEPTS IN PSYCHOLOGY;
4. PROVISION OF UNIFORM ELEMENTARY EDUCATION;
5. DIFFERENTIATION IN SECONDARY EDUCATION;
6. EMPHASIS ON THE PRAGMATIC ELEMENT IN STUDIES;
7. THE NEED TO IMPROVE TEACHER TRAINING.

(BASED ON A UNESCO SURVEY DATED 1962 DEALING WITH REFORMS IN EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURES IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES.)

c. PARLIAMENTARY ACT (JULY 1969)

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE REFORM BILL WAS PRECEDED BY FIVE YEARS OF RELENTLESS POLITICAL AND PUBLIC STRUGGLE INITIATED BY THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION IN ORDER TO CARRY OUT THE CHANGES HE WANTED TO ACHIEVE IN BOTH SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES.

THE STRUGGLE BEGAN WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PUBLIC COMMITTEE IN 1963. ONCE THE MINISTER BECAME AWARE OF THE FACT THAT HE COULD NOT IMPLEMENT ITS RECOMMENDATIONS, HE REFERRED THE ISSUE TO PARLIAMENT,

WHICH ADOPTED A DECISION TO ESTABLISH A SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE REFORM ISSUE. THE COMMITTEE DEVOTED TWO YEARS OF INTENSIVE DELIBERATIONS AND RESEARCH MARKED BY BITTER CONFRONTATIONS WITH THE TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS.

THE PRODUCTS OF THOSE TWO INTENSIVE YEARS WERE PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT WHICH IN JULY 1969 ADOPTED ITS RECOMMENDATIONS, FOCUSING ON THE CONDUCT OF CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION.

FOLLOWING ARE THE IMPORTANT DATES LEADING TO PARLIAMENT'S DECISION:

1. THE APPOINTMENT OF THE PRAWER COMMITTEE - 28.10.1963
2. THE RECOMMENDATIONS SUBMITTED TO THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION BY THE PRAWER COMMITTEE - 28.01.1965
3. PARLIAMENT'S DECISION TO ESTABLISH A PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE - 4.06.1966
4. THE SUBMISSION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE - 27.05.1968
5. PARLIAMENT'S DECISION TO IMPLEMENT THE REFORM - 29.07.1968

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PARLIAMENTARY DECISION

THE BASIC OVERALL GOAL, AS REFLECTED BY PARLIAMENT'S DECISION, WAS BOTH TO EXPAND FREE EDUCATION AND TO CHANGE THE EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE.

THE REFORM POLICIES WERE SUMMARIZED BY THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION IN HIS SPEECH, DELIVERED PRIOR TO PARLIAMENT'S DECISION IN JULY, 1969.

"THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE THIRD DECADE OF ISRAEL'S EXISTENCE SHOULD BE BASED ON FOUR GOALS: 1) TWELVE YEARS OF EDUCATION FOR ALL STUDENTS; 2) TO IMPROVE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF STUDENTS WHOSE PARENTS ARE IMMIGRANTS FROM ISLAMIC COUNTRIES; 3) TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ATTENDING SECONDARY SCHOOLS; 4) TO ACCELERATE THE PROCESS OF INTEGRATION AMONG STUDENTS FROM DIFFERENT ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS." HE BELIEVED THAT IN ORDER TO REACH THESE GOALS, THE FOLLOWING WAS NEEDED: 1) CONSECUTIVENESS OF ALL EDUCATION LEVELS; 2) EXPANSION OF THE "CEL" TO TWO ADDITIONAL

GRADES, 3) MAKING EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE MORE SUITABLE FOR EDUCATIONAL CONTENTS AND VALUES, AND 4) INCREASING THE CURRICULAR OFFERINGS AND THE INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS.

THE KNESSET (PARLIAMENT) DECIDED ON JULY 29, 1968 TO ADOPT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE REGARDING THE CHANGE IN STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM FROM AN EIGHT PLUS FOUR STRUCTURE TO A SIX PLUS SIX STRUCTURE. THE KNESSET ALSO DECIDED ON AN EXTENSION OF THE CEL BY TWO ADDITIONAL YEARS. THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE (MECC) WAS TO TAKE CHARGE OF IMPLEMENTING THE MISSION.

MAIN FEATURES OF THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

A. THE STARTING POINT IN BOTH THE DELIBERATIONS AND THE RECOMMENDATIONS WAS THAT THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION WAS TO BE VIEWED AS ONE COMPREHENSIVE UNIT. THUS, IT CONSIDERED THE WHOLE SYSTEM, STARTING WITH KINDERGARTEN, AS ONE WHICH COULD BE OPEN TO CHANGE, NOT JUST THE SECTION DEALING WITH INTERMEDIATE SCHOOLS.

B. THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE CLEARLY DEFINES THE CHANGES TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE SET OF GOALS, I.E., BOTH: STRUCTURAL-ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES, AS WELL AS THOSE RELATED TO VALUES-CONTENT.

C. THE COMMITTEE DWELT MORE ON CONCEPTUAL ISSUES THAN ON QUANTATIVE ISSUES.

D. THE COMMITTEE SPELT OUT FOR THE MINISTRY A LIST OF PRIORITIES IN RELATION TO THE CONDUCT OF STRUCTURAL CHANGES INCLUDING: TEACHER TRAINING, COUNSELLING TEAMS, CURRICULUM, EQUIPMENT FOR SCHOOLS, ETC.

THE MAJOR COMPONENTS OF THE DECISION INCLUDED: 1) THE FUTURE STRUCTURE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION, 2) THE EXPANSION OF THE COMPULSORY AND FREE EDUCATION LAW, 3) A SET OF PRIORITIES IN BRINGING ABOUT THE CHANGE IN THE STRUCTURE OF EDUCATION, 4) TYPES

OF SECONDARY EDUCATION, Amphasised 5) PEDAGOGICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE CHANGE, 6) TEACHER TRAINING FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION, 7) ACTIVITIES FOR IMPROVING EDUCATION AT ALL LEVELS, AND 8) CREATION OF AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE asked for FOR CONSULTATION AND FOLLOW UP.

IT LISTED EXPLICITLY THE FOLLOWING MEASURES TO BE TAKEN: TO BUILD JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS (JHS) AS A FIRST PRIORITY: THE CEL WAS TO BE EXTENDED TO GRADE NINE BY 1972 AND TO GRADE TEN BY 1975; TEACHERS AT THE JHS LEVEL WERE TO BE CERTIFICATED FOLLOWING UNIVERSITY GRADUATION. THE DECISION SPECIFICALLY DETERMINED THAT THE TOP PRIORITY WAS TO HAVE THE JHS ATTACHED TO OTHER SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS. THIS SPECIFICATION WAS BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE THAT THE JHS IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF A SECONDARY SCHOOL.

Also the Committee ~~OTHER SECTIONS INVOLVED~~ SPECIFIED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOVERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS. FOR EXAMPLE: UNIFYING SEVERAL LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITIES FOR THE PURPOSE OF JOINTLY MANAGING DIFFERENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS (ACADEMIC, VOCATIONAL, COMPREHENSIVE); ENCOURAGING THE EXPANSION OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEVELS IN TEACHERS' TRAINING COLLEGES. THE DECISION ALSO CALLED FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (COMPOSED OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MECC, TEACHERS' ORGANIZATIONS, MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES, AND UNIVERSITIES) TO OVERSEE THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS AND TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE REFORM'S GOALS AND OBJECTIVES WERE MET.

D. THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION

STARTING IN JULY 1969 THE MINISTRY BEGAN TO SET UP A STRUCTURE AIMED AT ENABLING ITS VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS TO CARRY OUT THE MAJOR CHANGE PROCESS. THIS INCLUDED:

1. CENTRAL COMMITTEE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REFORM (CCIR) HEADED BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL AND INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES OF BOTH

THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND PEDAGOGICAL UNITS AS WELL AS REPRESENTATIVES OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND THE TWO TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS.

2. A SUB COMMITTEE FOR PEDAGOGICAL MATTERS (PM) HEADED BY THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL.

3. A SUB COMMITTEE FOR ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES (OM) HEADED BY THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL.

THE COMMITTEES OPERATED SIMULTANEOUSLY AND IN CLOSE COOPERATION. THEY MET AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK AND CONDUCTED NUMEROUS VISITS TO SETTLEMENTS AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES. IMPLEMENTATION WAS RATHER SLOW, MAINLY DUE TO DIFFICULTIES IN MOBILIZING FINANCIAL RESOURCES.

IN 1974, SIX YEARS AFTER THE INCEPTION OF THE REFORM, THE MIDDLE SCHOOLS ACCOUNTED FOR THIRTY-FOUR PERCENT OF THE STUDENT BODY IN THE RELEVANT AGE GROUP. IN 1984, SIXTEEN YEARS AFTER INCEPTION, THE PERCENTAGE HAD REACHED FIFTY-FOUR, AND TODAY, 1986, IT IS ABOUT FIFTY-SIX PERCENT.

THE PROGRAM INCLUDED THE LARGE CITIES AS WELL AS THE DEVELOPMENT TOWNS AND AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENTS, GENERAL SCHOOLS AS WELL AS RELIGIOUS ONES. ALL STEPS WERE ACCOMPANIED BY PREPARATION OF NEW CURRICULA, PROVIDING TEACHERS WITH TRAINING ON A UNIVERSITY LEVEL, PUTTING UP NEW SCHOOL BUILDINGS WITH EMPHASIS ON LABORATORIES.

MAJOR OBSTACLES AND DIFFICULTIES

A. THE CONTINUING RESISTANCE OF THE TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS.

B. THE RESISTANCE PUT UP BY PARENTS IN SOME AREAS, OF WHICH A NUMBER OF CASES WERE BROUGHT TO COURT. MOST OF THEM WERE RELATED TO THE ISSUE OF INTEGRATION OF SEPHARDIC WITH ASHKENAZIC STUDENTS.

C. FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS.

IT IS WORTHWHILE STRESSING THE FACT THAT THE MINISTRY HAD ASKED THE UNIVERSITIES IN 1972 TO CONDUCT A SPECIAL FOLLOW UP STUDY ON SOCIAL AND PEDAGOGICAL ASPECTS. INTENSIVE DELIBERATIONS TOOK PLACE AT A LATER STAGE AS PART OF THE PROCESS OF REVIEWING THE FINDINGS AND DRAWING CONCLUSIONS.

STRATEGIES

IN THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTING THE REFORM, A FEW STRATEGIES WERE APPLIED BY THE MINISTRY, INCLUDING:

1. THE USE OF PUBLIC COMMITTEES THROUGH WHICH THE MINISTER COULD MOBILIZE PUBLIC SUPPORT. IT WAS BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THROUGH THE REGULAR ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE, ONE WHICH REQUIRES A DIALOGUE WITH THE TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS, THE REFORM COULD NOT BE IMPLEMENTED.

2. INTRODUCTION OF THE REFORM WAS AN ACT WHICH AIMS AT A RADICAL CHANGE IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND NOT AN IMPROVEMENT IN ANY SEGMENT OF THE SYSTEM.

3. THE INTRODUCTION OF NORMATIVE VALUE-BASED OBJECTIVES AROUND WHICH THE MINISTRY COULD BUILD A BROAD PUBLIC CONSENSUS. THUS, THE DISCUSSIONS FOCUSED ON THE FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION, RATHER THAN ON THE "WHY"; IT TOOK PLACE AFTER THE PUBLIC COMMITTEES (PRAWER AND THE KNESSET COMMITTEES) HAD ALREADY GIVEN THEIR "LETTER OF ACCREDITATION" TO THE MECC.

4. THE INTRODUCTION OF BROAD SOCIAL OBJECTIVES CAN ALSO HELP SECURE A MORE FAVORABLE CLIMATE FOR THE ALLOCATION OF FUNDS, SINCE EVERYONE CAN BE EXPECTED TO AGREE ON OBJECTIVES SUCH AS THE RAISING OF THE LEVEL OF STUDIES, THE REDUCTION OF LEVELS OF DROP-OUTS, THE EXTENSION OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION, AND INTEGRATION AMONG THE ETHNIC GROUP

F. ANALYSIS OF CHANGE EFFORTS

STUDY OF THE REFORM PROVIDES US WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO ANALYSE A MAJOR SOCIAL UNDERTAKING OF NATIONAL MAGNITUDE, FOCUSING ON THE ORGANIZATION ASPECTS OF IMPLEMENTATION.

DIFFICULTIES IN THE ANALYSIS PROCESS

THE MAJOR GOALS OF THE REFORM ARE 1) TO ENHANCE THE LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND 2) TO ACCELERATE THE PROCESS OF INTEGRATION. IN BOTH AREAS IT IS

RATHER DIFFICULT TO CLEARLY DEFINE SUCCESS OR FAILURE.

THUS, IT IS DIFFICULT TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER THE REFORM IS A SO-CALLED SUCCESS. THIS ALSO IS NOT THE KEY ISSUE. THE ISSUE IS NOT WHETHER IT WAS A TOTAL SUCCESS BUT RATHER WHETHER THE BASIC VALUES, OBJECTIVES AND GUIDELINES OF THE REFORM ARE CARRIED OUT IN THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION.

THE REFORM IS NOT A ONE-TIME ACTION. IT IS AN EXTENDED PROCESS OF PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW UP CARRIED OUT OVER A PERIOD OF TIME AND NECESSITATING CHANGES AND ADAPTATION IN RELATION TO REALITY. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REFORM IS TIED TO A NUMBER OF AREAS - TEACHER TRAINING, BOOKS, SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF SCHOOLS WHICH ARE ALSO FUNCTIONAL, EQUIPPING OF SCHOOLS, ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRANSPORTATION AND FEEDING, COUNSELLING AND SCREENING OF STUDENTS, MANPOWER ALLOCATION. ALL ARE AREAS WHICH HAVE TO BE STUDIED IN RELATION TO EACH SCHOOL IN WHICH THE REFORM WAS IMPLEMENTED, AS WELL AS FROM THE OVERALL POINT OF VIEW.

A LISTING OF ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED

THE REFORM, AS ALREADY MENTIONED, ASPIRES TO ACHIEVE TWO MAIN GOALS:

1. THE RAISE THE LEVEL OF STUDIES;
2. THE ACCELERATE THE SOCIAL INTEGRATION PROCESS.

THE FIRST OBJECTIVE WAS ACHIEVED THROUGH:

1. INNOVATIONS AND CHANGES IN THE CURRICULUM AND METHODS OF TEACHING;
2. BROADENING THE SCOPE OF TEACHER TRAINING AND RAISING ITS LEVEL AS WELL AS REFERRING TEACHERS WITH UNIVERSITY EDUCATION TO TEACH IN MIDDLE SCHOOLS;
3. INTENSIFYING ASSISTANCE TO STUDENTS FROM UNDERPRIVILEGED FAMILIES;
4. CHANGES IN THE INNER STRUCTURE OF THE SCHOOLS THROUGH THE GROUPING METHOD;
5. ESTABLISHING A SET UP FOR OBSERVATION, COUNSELLING, REFERRAL SERVICES.

AN ATTEMPT TO HASTEN SOCIAL INTEGRATION WAS MADE THROUGH:

1. TRANSFERRING STUDENTS TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS WITHOUT A SELECTION PROCESS;
2. NEW ZONING IN ORDER TO CREATE HETEROGENOUS FEEDING AREAS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLS (JHS).

ALTHOUGH THE FOCUS OF ALL ACTIVITY WAS THE MIDDLE SCHOOL SYSTEM, THE SYSTEM NEVERTHELESS DEALT BOTH WITH THE EXTENSION OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION AS WELL AS THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS AS PART OF THE REFORM.

G. A LISTING OF MAJOR CHANGES IN THE ISRAELI EDUCATION SYSTEM

1. THE SYSTEM OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS TODAY ENCOMPASSES Fifty THREE POINT SIX PERCENT OF THE TOTAL STUDENT BODY IN THE RELEVANT AGE GROUP.
2. IN THE VOCATIONAL SCHOOL SYSTEM THERE IS AN UPWARD TREND IN THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ATTENDING THE VOCATIONAL-ACADEMIC STREAM (FIFTY-FIVE PERCENT IN 1985 FOR THE TWELFTH GRADE COMPARED WITH THIRTY-SIX PERCENT IN 1973).
3. DURING THE PERIOD 1974-84 THERE WAS AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF YOUTH ATTENDING SCHOOLS (FROM SEVENTY-SEVEN PERCENT TO EIGHTY-FOUR PERCENT) WHILE THERE WAS A DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF THOSE WORKING (FROM SEVEN TO THREE PERCENT) AND IN THE PERCENTAGE OF THOSE NEITHER STUDYING NOR WORKING (FROM NINE TO SIX PERCENT).
4. THERE IS AN UPWARD TREND IN THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS OF SEPHARDIC ORIGIN IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL SYSTEM AND THE GAP BETWEEN THEIR PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION AND AMONG THE STUDENT BODY, IS NARROWING. (IN 1967 BOUT FIFTY PERCENT OF THE YOUTH AGED 14-17 WERE OF SEPHARDIC ORIGIN AND ACCOUNTED FOR THIRTY-SIX PERCENT OF THE STUDENT BODY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS - A GAP OF FOURTEEN PERCENT. IN 1972 THEY COMPRISED FIFTY-SIX PERCENT OF THE TOTAL JEWISH POPULATION AND FIFTY-TWO PERCENT OF THE STUDENT BODY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS - A GAP OF FOUR PERCENT.)

5. THE ANNUAL DROP-OUT RATE IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL SYSTEM IS DECREASING DRASTICALLY FROM SEVENTEEN POINT THREE PERCENT IN 1975 TO FIVE POINT ONE PERCENT IN 1985.

H. ADDITIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION → is how identify through the BY-PRODUCT Concept

A BY-PRODUCT IS A PHENOMENON OR AN EVENT WHICH CONSTITUTES AN OUTCOME OF A CERTAIN ACTION WHICH HAD NOT BEEN SPECIFICALLY DICTATED BY THE GOALS, OR HAD NOT BEEN ORIGINALLY VIEWED AS A PREREQUISITE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GOAL. A BY-PRODUCT IS UNVEILED DURING THE CHANGE PROCESS ITSELF.

THE BY-PRODUCTS OF THE ABOVE PROCESS HAD NOT BEEN ANTICIPATED, BUT TURNED OUT TO BE HIGHLY DESIRABLE CHANGES. THEY DEMONSTRATED THAT WHEN GOAL DISPLACEMENT IS ABSENT, UNANTICIPATED AND UNDESIRABLE CHANGES ACTUALLY BROADEN THE SCOPE WITHIN WHICH THE GOAL CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED, THUS STRENGTHENING THE BASE WHICH PREVENTS THE GOAL FROM BEING DISPLACED. SUCH ANTICIPATED FUNCTIONS RATHER THAN DYS-FUNCTIONS MAY BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS. THREE GROUPS OF UNPLANNED BY-PRODUCTS ARE SUMMARIZED BELOW:

A. BY-PRODUCTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

1. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW GOALS BROUGHT ABOUT DISCUSSIONS ON THE ESSENCE OF QUALITY OF EDUCATION. THE SYSTEM RECEIVED A "CONCEPTUAL SHOCK" THROUGH THE ACTS OF THE REFORM, BRINGING ABOUT FRESH CONCEPTS AND IDEAS.

2. OPEN PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS BEGAN ON THE ESSENCE AND STRUCTURE OF ISRAELI SOCIETY AS A WHOLE. DISCUSSIONS ON INTEGRATION DEALT WITH THE PROBLEM OF SOCIETY AT LARGE AND HELPED IN THE EXAMINATION OF THE ISSUE OF INTEGRATION IN A BROADER CONTEXT. DISCUSSIONS CENTERED ON VALUE ISSUES.

3. ALTHOUGH THE CHANGE WAS CONCEIVED AS ONE INVOLVING STRUCTURAL ASPECTS ONLY, IT BECAME NEVERTHELESS A CATALYST FOR VARIOUS PEDAGOGICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES NOT ONLY IN THE JHS Junior High School BUT ALSO IN THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

B BY-PRODUCTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE MECC RELATIONS WITH EXTERNAL BODIES

1. CLOSER RELATIONS AND COOPERATION WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES DEVELOPED PRIMARILY AROUND THE MAPPING PROCESS.

2. COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE MECC AND THE UNIVERSITIES HAS BEEN ENHANCED.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DEALING WITH EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS HAS INTENSIFIED.

C BY-PRODUCTS ASSOCIATED WITH INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MECC

1. PEDAGOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS BECAME CENTRAL IN PREPARATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS.

2. COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION WAS FACILITATED BETWEEN PEDAGOGICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS. DURING PREPARATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE REFORM, CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO UNITS DEVELOPED.

3. IMPROVEMENT HAD OCCURRED IN THE PROCESS, AND QUALITY, OF DECISION-MAKING IN THE MECC MANAGEMENT. THE NECESSITY OF PREPARING A GENERAL REFORM PLAN FACILITATED MORE EFFICIENT DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES.

4. WORK METHODS BECAME MORE SCIENTIFIC. MAPPING AND ZONING TURNED INTO A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF THE TOTAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN CERTAIN LOCALITIES. IN THE PAST, THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES HAD DEALT WITH THE VARIOUS EDUCATIONAL LEVELS SEPARATELY.

5. COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION INCREASED AMONG UNITS OF THE CENTRAL MECC OFFICE AND A MORE INTEGRATIVE EFFORT WAS BROUGHT ABOUT. THE MAPPING PROCESS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REFORM INVOLVED AN EXAMINATION OF ALL EDUCATIONAL LEVELS SIMULTANEOUSLY.

6. THE REFORM ACCELERATED STRUCTURAL DECENTRALIZATION OF THE MECC. MORE AUTHORITY HAS BEEN DELEGATED TO DISTRICT OFFICES.

7. MORE RESOURCES (PRIMARILY MONEY BUT ALSO PERSONNEL SLOTS) HAVE BEEN ALLOCATED AND CHANNELED INTO THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM.

LESSONS OF EXPERIENCE

WE HAVE LOOKED AT A NATIONAL ISSUE IN WHICH POLITICIANS AND PROFESSIONALS WERE COMMITTED TO FACING A CHALLENGE IN ORDER TO SOLVE PROBLEMS, IMPLEMENT ACTIVITIES AND ACQUIRE APPROPRIATE RESOURCES.

A STRUCTURAL CHANGE IS A TOOL FOR ACHIEVING SOCIAL GOALS. THE PUBLIC DISCUSSION WAS IMPLEMENTED THROUGH PUBLIC FORUMS AND POLITICAL BODIES, AND CAME TO POSITIVE CONCLUSIONS.

IMPLEMENTATION IS A PROCESS AND NOT A ONE-TIME DECISION: A PROCESS WHICH COMPRISES MANY PEDAGOGICAL, SOCIAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY COMPONENTS.

THE IMPACT ON THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM (AND ON ISRAELI SOCIETY AS A WHOLE) IS ENORMOUS, ESPECIALLY DUE TO THE MISSION TO ACHIEVE MORE INTEGRATION IN SCHOOLS.

ALMOST TWENTY YEARS HAVE PASSED AND THE WORK IS LITTLE MORE THAN HALF DONE. THE SYSTEM HAS TO DEAL WITH NEW REALITIES, NEW POSSIBILITIES, AND DIFFERENT LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS, POLITICALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY.